

Venue:
Community

Goal:
Eliminate Exposure
to Secondhand Smoke

Activity:
C4.03 Policy
Education – Public Venues
& Worksites



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- **Population (Census 2000): 606,024**
- **Total Households (Census 2000): 224,852**
- **Adult Cigarette Smoking Prevalence (BRFSS/ATS 2003): 19 percent**
- **Estimated Number of Adult Cigarette Smokers (DOH 2004): 83,100**
- **Number of Students (OSPI 2003): 107,806**
- **Eighth Grade Cigarette Smoking Prevalence (HYS 2002): 8 percent**

"For Our Kids," Tobacco Free Parks – Snohomish County

Project Description

The Snohomish Health District, along with the Marysville Parks & Recreation Department, established the "For Our Kids," Tobacco Free Parks program in November 2001. The City of Marysville was the first to implement the program in all its city parks. Since that time, eight cities in Snohomish County have followed Marysville's lead and have adopted tobacco-free park policies.



Inputs

Rationale

- Smoke-free policies can be effective in educating the public about tobacco issues. Smoking bans and restrictions are strongly recommended community interventions because of the evidence that they reduce exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Outdoor secondhand smoke is becoming an increasingly hot topic in the community, with people both for and against limiting it. Creation of a voluntary ban focused on protecting children exposed to secondhand smoke was an opportunity to make a change in the public norm without creating a lot of debate.
- Going through the process of establishing tobacco-free parks in one community provides a mechanism for policy change in nearby areas.

- Target Audience**
- Primary: Public policymakers
 - Secondary: Park visitors

Resources

- Staff**
- Two Snohomish Health District staff started the project and currently one to two staff members are involved along with other community partners.
- Funding**
- About \$1,500 was spent on the Marysville project, including signs, promotion, materials, etc.
 - Between \$500 to \$1,500 was spent in each other city.
 - State Tobacco Prevention and Control Program funds were used.
- Partnerships**
- Parks and recreation leadership, city leadership (including the mayor and city council members), and community members.

Activities

1. The Snohomish Health District approached the city parks board and the city council about adopting a voluntary smoking ban.
2. Partnerships were formed between the health district and the parks and recreation department.
3. The two groups worked together to design and produce the "For Our Kids," Tobacco Free Parks signs.
4. The Snohomish Health District purchased the signs.
5. The Snohomish Health District planned a kickoff celebration, which included sending a news release and coordinating media coverage. In some cities, the health department also provided educational and social marketing items to help promote the new policy.
6. The city parks and recreation department installed the signs.

Outputs

1. In Marysville, two "For Our Kids," Tobacco Free Parks signs were posted in all 18 city parks. The kickoff celebration was emceed by the mayor of Marysville and attended by parks staff, students, law enforcement, policymakers, and community members. The event was covered by two local newspapers.

To date the following cities also have adopted smoke-free park policies and posted signs in all of their city parks:
 - Arlington
 - Granite Falls
 - Gold Bar
 - Index
 - Monroe
 - Mukilteo
 - Sultan
2. Snohomish County neighborhood parks also have adopted voluntary smoke-free policies. The Everett AquaSox stadium and the Everett Events Center have adopted a smoke-free policy.
3. The health district is approaching the City of Everett with a proposal in March 2004.



Evaluation

- Almost three-fifths of Snohomish County residents report smoking should be completely banned in outdoor public areas where children may be present (59 percent \pm 5 percent, *ATS 2003* preliminary data).
- There have been no citizen complaints since the bans have taken effect. Parks maintenance crews have seen a significant decrease in cigarette butts and other garbage. The overall cleanliness of the parks has been noticed.

Lessons Learned

- Make use of different partners, including schools and groups that frequent parks, such as sports leagues, to provide resources and show policymakers that the project has community support.
- Know which groups in your area have jurisdiction over parks and approach the ones open to the idea.
- Be prepared to back up your request with supportive evidence and examples of other successful smoke-free park programs.
- Creating a voluntary ban is an effective method for educating the public without involving resources that would be necessary to enforce an ordinance or without creating a large controversy.